

Elements of the Water Operators' Communication Toolkit Reflecting on existing practices

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**1st International Conference of the Global
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Raising Awareness and Communicating the Urgency to Act
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- You have sent us information on your practices.
- This is intended as a summary and analysis of the information sent by you

The Presentation

- Introduction
- Information practices of WOPs
 - Types of information and means TO users
 - Types of information and means FROM users
- Communication campaigns
- Educational activities
- Other SCRs activities

The United Nations Office: our mission!!

Facilitates information, implements communication campaigns and raises awareness in relation to the water and sanitation goals. THE MANDATE.

Strengthens capacities of relevant stakeholders (SUCH WATER OPERATORS) in addressing key obstacles impeding the implementation of the water and sanitation agenda.....

Communicating the Urgency to Act: We are here because **Water Operators**

- ... are leaders in the efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

» And

- WE need to support your Communication and Information Strategies so that you can play a full role in the urgent global effort....

There are clear Benefits of information and communication efforts of water operators

- Information and communication shape attitudes, opinions and beliefs about water use.
- Information and communication bring about change in users' habits and behaviours (reduced water losses and pollution)



....and also benefits for the operator

- **Information and communication improve service performance.** They encourage stakeholder involvement and participation to provide the water operator with performance feedback.
- **Information and communication influence perceptions of risks and hazards and customer satisfaction.** They reduce complaints and increase trust.

...part of Consumer rights

- The right to satisfaction of basic needs: Potable water and Basic sanitation services.
- The right to safety: safe and reliable water services.
- **The right to be informed**
- The right to choose
- **The right to be heard** (e.g. complaints)
- The right to redress
- The right to **consumer education**
- The right to a healthy environment

Source: International Labour Organization, based on UN guidelines



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Existing Information Practices



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Types of information provided to the users

- **Customer metering, billing and services provided** is the information MOST FREQUENTLY made available to users
- **Information on water quality/safety and on service disruption** : NOT ALWAYS made available
- Information on the **level of investments and ongoing projects** provided in SOME CASES.

Means of sending information to the users

1. By post (mainly water bills)
2. Through the web
3. Direct information through Customer Services (Not all operators provide customer services)
 - By phone
 - At the operator offices
4. Posted at the company offices

...but also AND INCREASINGLY

5. Campaigns in the media and other types

6. Annual reports and thematic reports

7. Distribution of leaflets and brochures

8. Film projections, distribution of CDs/DVDs

9. Posters and exhibits

Types of information received from users

- Complaints on services provision
 - Hours of provision of water
 - Quality problems
- Complaints on billing
- Network problems
- Level of satisfaction from services

Means of receiving information from users

Phone



Customer
Services



Letters
E-mail



Web



User satisfaction
surveys

Some examples in Asia

Name of operator	Type of company	Countries	Type of information provided to users	Means of sending information to users	Means of receiving information from users
Government of Tamil Nadu, India	Public	India	Billing, tariffs, services, water availability, reservoirs, ongoing projects, etc.	Billing invoice, web, letter, etc.	E-mail, letter, regional complaints offices, phone
Water and Sanitation Agency Rawalpindi	Public	Pakistan	Billing, tariffs, services, ongoing projects, level of investments, equipments,...	Billing invoice, web, letter, reports, etc.	E-mail, letter, network of customer centres, phone

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Some examples in Africa

Name of operator	Type of company	Countries	Type of information provided to users	Means of sending information to users	Means of receiving information from users
Namibia Water Corporation	Public	Namibia	Billing, tariffs, infrastructure, dams' level, projects, business plan, guidelines, etc.	Billing invoice, web, letter, reports, bulletins, etc.	E-mail, letter, complaints offices, phone
Office National de l'Eau Potable, Maroc	Public	Morocco	Billing, tariffs, services, level of investment, legal norms, etc.	Billing invoice, web, letter, publications, brochures, etc.	E-mail, letter, phone, regional directorates

Some examples in Latin America

Name of operator	Type of company	Countries	Type of information provided to users	Means of sending information to users	Means of receiving information from users
Empresa Nicaragüense de Acueductos y Alcantarillados	Public	Nicaragua	Billing, tariffs, services, projects, investments,..	Billing invoice, web, letter, bulletins, reports, etc.	E-mail, letter, phone. No information on customer services provided on the web
Empresas Públicas de Medellín de Agua, Energía y Gas	Public	Colombia	Billing, tariffs, services, financial and environmental reports , budget, etc.	Billing invoice, web, letter, etc.	Virtual office , e-mail, letter, phone, network of customer offices

Some examples in Europe

Name of operator	Type of company	Countries	Type of information provided to users	Means of sending information to users	Means of receiving information from users
Eau de Paris	Public-Private Partnership	France	Billing, tariffs, services, infrastructure, level of consumption, water quality	Billing invoice, web, letter, social networks (Facebook), brochures,...	E-mail, letter, phone
Aguas de Barcelona (AGBAR)	Private	Spain, Chile, United Kingdom, China, Colombia, etc.	Billing, tariffs, services, legal norms, water quality,...	Billing invoice, web, letter, newsletter, brochures, csr reports, customer workshops, ...	E-mail, letter, phone, user satisfaction surveys

Comments and Recommendations

Comments	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water bills are frequently the solely/ prevailing users' information channel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further explore other means of sending information to the users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is mainly on billing, tariffs and types of services provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand information provided to the user (e.g. water quality, water use, ongoing projects, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User satisfaction surveys are still not used by many operators and, when used, results are not always made available to the user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the management of customer relationships through user satisfaction surveys • Increase transparency: publish and promote access to results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In countries where there is high level of access to internet, the possibilities of ICTs may need to be further explored by most operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest more in virtual office spaces and services • Explore other ways of customer involvement (e.g. through social networks)

Existing Communication Campaigns



Use a
Broom
Instead
OF
A **Hose.**

 **NICE
SAVE!**
USE WATER WISELY 

www.wateraware.org



USA UN VASO
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te estés
lavando los
dientes.

¡CUIDA EL AGUA!

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BIO-BIO 99.7
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Campaigns on...

- Droughts, water scarcity.
- Water Quality
- Health concerns.
- Service disruptions.

The important questions in communication

- Who communicates: WOPs responsibilities.
- What key messages we want to communicate about scarcity/water value, extreme events, health and sanitation, water quality,
- To whom: client groups, women, men, youth, rural, urban, illiterate, poor.
- Means for communicating: media, web, electronic and print material, workshops, ads with celebrities..
- Effects: IN WATER SAVED, IMPROVED HEALTH..



Communication campaigns: droughts

Aguas de Barcelona (AGBAR)

Date: Spring-Summer 2008

Objectives:

- Encourage wise water use
- Increased awareness about the importance of the drought

Actions

- Inform about the drought situation that affected Barcelona in 2008
- Inform the population about measures taken to guarantee water supply

Means:

- Special section on the web
- Information and messages on the bill invoice
- Customer workshops, seminars, conferences

Effects: Decrease of 4% in household water consumption from Dec. 2007 to Dec. 2008



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Communication campaigns: droughts

EMASESA: Seville Municipal Public Operator

- **Date:** 2005
- **Objectives:** Reduction in water consumption, Improvements in reservoir levels
- **Actions:** Inform and increase awareness about the drought situation that affected Seville in 2005
- **Means:** Exhibitions on the occasion of World Water Day and World Environment Day, Distribution and promotion of good practices among professionals, Radio messages, Information and Interviews on TV , Press releases, Special section on the web, Street campaigns, Messages on the invoice
- **Effects:** **water consumption decreased, improved dialog with citizens, behavior changes**



Communication campaign: water quality

National Water and Sewerage Corporation , Uganda

- **Date:** At the end of the year (every year)
- **Objectives:**
 - Reduced population's concerns on water quality
 - Inform and raise awareness on treatments used to reduce water quality problems
- **Means:**
 - Customers and the press are invited to visit plants and observe the activities that are carried out by the organization to mitigate the water quality problems
 - Publication of water quality monitoring surveys
- **Effects:** Decreased number of water quality complaints

Communication campaign: health concerns

Community Water & Sanitation Agency, Ghana

Objectives: Informing about health threats of high fluoride content on water for rural population and importance of hygiene habits.

Actions: Provide key information on the treatments and the importance of hand washing

Means: Direct communication, Web, Campaign “HAND WASHING AND FOOD HANDLING” : communicating actions about hand washing with soap and water at critical times, after the use of toilet, after cleaning a baby, before handling food

Effects: Increased awareness and health



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Communication campaigns: service disruption

St. Kitts Water Services Department (WSD)

- **Date:** 3-4 times per year
- **Objectives:**
- Insure affected population is prepared
- **Actions:**
 - To inform of occasional water disruptions.
- **Means:**
 - Public service announcements to all radio stations
- **Results:**
 - **Decrease of complaints**

Comments and Recommendations

Comments	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common media in communication campaigns are visual (TV) and spoken (Radio), Not so much written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have synergies with education programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different communication focus according to regions: efficient water use, environment, Right to access, Health and Hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to consider also communicating the importance of protecting water sources and value of the resource (including environmental)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication campaigns are often limited to the duration of the event or concern (e.g. drought, water quality problem, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on a continuous base, insist on preparedness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of campaigns are frequently not made available enough to the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote access to results as an additional mean to motivate people in pursuing the promoted behavior.

Educational activities

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Objective

- Educate in specific values: Which values?
- Increase knowledge: Of which specific issues?
- Promote behavior changes: To achieve what?



Most frequent modalities

- Visits to water/sewage treatment plants
- Preparation and distribution of educational materials
- Exhibitions
- Conferences, workshops, debates
- Contests

Morocco: Office National de l'Eau Potable (ONEP)



- **Initiative:** Kids corner
- **Educational levels:** primary and secondary education
- **Themes:** water cycle, water treatment, water consumption, water pollution
- **Means:** mainly materials to be downloaded from the web, painting contests
- **Main strengths:** materials available in French and in Arabic

Nicaragua: Enacal



- **Initiative:** Hablemos del Agua
- **Educational levels:** secondary education, university, communities
- **Themes:** wise use of water, pollution, wastewater management
- **Means:** conferences, distribution of books and notebooks containing key messages, competitions
- **Main strengths:** activities beyond the educational centre, implication of families

Spain: Canal de Isabel II



- **Initiative:** Canal Educa
- **Educational levels:** all, including adults and university
- **Themes:** different aspects of water consumption, water and wastewater management
- **Means:**
 - Children and youth: web, publications, games, blog, chat, etc.
 - University: conferences, research projects
- **Main strengths:** Variety of target audiences and means



Comments and Recommendations

Comments	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequently, the approach is too general	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Themes could be made closer to daily life situations• Consequences of individual/collective behavior should be considered in educational activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Themes covered mainly just refer to water consumption/conservation, water pollution and wastewater treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Themes should be enlarged and other values from a SD perspective.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education is still a non-existing or a marginal activity for most operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take water issues into schools and beyond school walls.• Support efforts of partnerships between operators on education programs.

Other Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives

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United Nations Global Compact

- A strategic policy initiative for those organizations that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption
- Examples include:
 - Spain: AGBAR, EMASESA, Canal de Isabel II, EMUASA
 - France: Suez Environnement, Veolia Environnement
 - Colombia: Empresas Públicas de Medellín (EPM)



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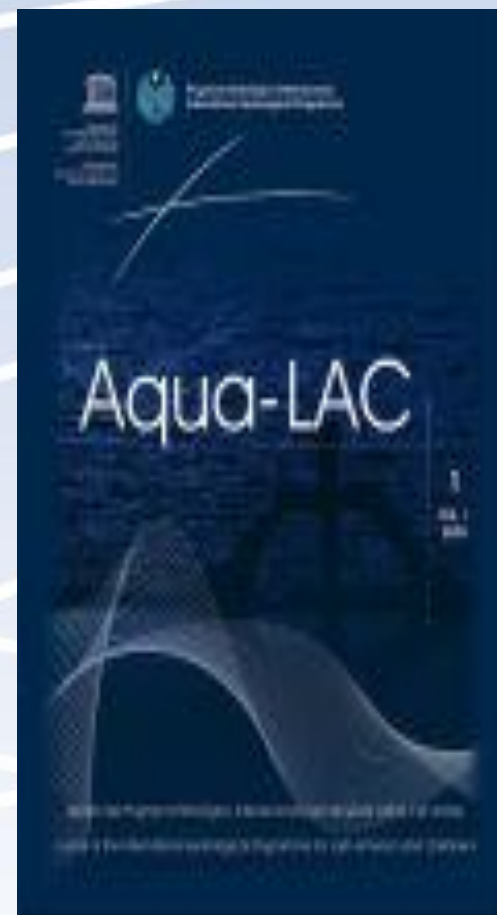


INFORME
RESPONSABILIDAD
CORPORATIVA

//2008



Agbar



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International cooperation

Name of operator	Country	Partner organizations / countries	Specific actions
Aguas de Barcelona (AGBAR)	Spain	NGO "Fundeso" Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration for improving water supply to the populations of Djinack Bara and Djinack Djatoko , Senegal
Empresa Metropolitana de Abastecimiento y Saneamiento de Aguas de Sevilla (EMASESA)	Spain	FACUA ASA Fundación DeSevilla Cuba AECID Mauritania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational community programme to promote the sustainable consumption of water and enhance leakage reduction in La Habana, Cuba • Project to improve the water purification process in Nouakchott, Mauritania

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Comments and Recommendations

Comments	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives are still at a nascent stage for most operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote CSR activities and adhere to the UN Global Compact Initiative, make it known and promote participation from other operators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horizontal cooperation is not enough explored by most operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adhere to the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance

Final Comments

INFORMATION

- Variety of practices. Rapid transformation in relations between operators and the public..
- Consumer Rights but also citizens rights –PP- and responsibilities (as users).
- It is helping breaching the gap between expectations of citizens and reality of operators services.

COMMUNICATION

- Integrating public opinion into water management practices of operators is changing priorities and communication practices.
- Operators have been key in transforming attitudes and behavior specially in droughts and in providing information about issues that the citizens are concerned about (water quality, services). Specially in the case of “permanent” campaigns.
- Increased transparency and accountability of Water Operators.
- Contributes to citizens taking part in responsible water use.

EDUCACION

- Education campaigns of operators: key in the change from immediate to long term behavior change.

RSC

- UN Global Compact and WOPs key initiatives.
- Operators and Citizen become committed to solidarity. And ethical and transparent behavior in the context of Sustainable Development.

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The questions for the Working Groups

- What else can you tell us about your experience with this and other communication and information practices?.
- What works?
- **REAL IMPACT:** improved water use; hygiene and sanitation practices; resilience from droughts and floods, transparency in WOs Practices.